U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Fish Passage Restoration in Alaska

Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management

Since 1999, the Alaska Region's Fish Passage Program and its partners have removed 16 instream structures that have impeded fish migration. This work has reopened more than 200 miles of stream, and provided salmon, trout, and grayling with access to important spawning, rearing, and over-wintering habitats.

USFWS

Working in midwinter to protect downstream spawning areas (left), workers replace an undersized culvert (inset) at the outlet of the Matanuska Valley's Orchid Lake with a larger structure. Less than a year later, sockeye salmon returned to spawn – even in the barrel of the culvert!

Only in recent years have State and Federal agencies recognized the growing threat that these barriers pose to sustaining fisheries in Alaska. To date, thousands of culverts and dozens of abandoned dams are known to block or restrict fish passage. In some areas of Alaska, four out of five culverts restrict fish movement.

USFWS

In January 2002, removal of the abandoned FE Dam on the Chatanika River near Fairbanks reopened more than 100 miles of salmon habitat. Removing this dam, in place since the 1920s, was a priority in the public-private *Yukon River Comprehensive Salmon Plan for Alaska*.

USFWS

The Service and the City of North Pole replaced three collapsed culverts with a bridge. Here, the mayor of North Pole and his daughter inspect the completed project. Road construction along Interior Alaska's Chena Slough has created numerous barriers to anadromous fish. This was the first of nine planned projects; two similar projects will be completed on Chena Slough in 2003.

Ten additional projects will be initiated under the Fish Passage, Partners for Fish and Wildlife, and Coastal Programs in 2003.

Contact:
Michael Roy
R7 Fish Passage Program Coordinator
Phone: 1 907/786 3925
Email: Michael_Roy@fws.gov